

Job title: **Head of Merchandising**

Core information

Location: London head office ▾	Lines of business or shared capability area:
Reports to:	
People Management: Yes ▾	
Assignment Management: Please select ▾	
Partnership Level: Partnership level 4 ▾	Manager's Partnership level: Please select ▾
Number of direct reports:	Partnership level(s) of direct reports: Partnership level 5 ▾

About the John Lewis Partnership

The Partnership is the UK's largest employee-owned business and home to our two well-loved retail brands - John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners, as well as expanding into new areas beyond retail.

We aren't an ordinary business though. The Partnership is different because everyone who works here isn't just an employee. We are Partners, with a shared responsibility for our success, and we share the rewards when we're successful.

Everything we do is powered by our unique purpose: **Working in Partnership for a happier world.** Our Purpose inspires our principles, drives our decisions and acts as our guide, so that everything we do contributes to Happier People, Happier Business and a Happier World.

Critical purpose of the role

As Head of Merchandising at The John Lewis Partnership, your role is pivotal in leading the Merchandising function and translating the business strategy into effective Directorate and Category Strategies, working closely with the Head of Buying and Category Director.

This role is critical in driving customer-centric commercial outcomes whilst driving operational efficiency.

You have the accountability for profit and cashflow through sales, margin and demand plans within the Buying & Merchandising professions and support budgets across connected stakeholders to ensure these are robust and deliver against strategy.

You will work closely with the Commercial Planning team to provide commercial rigour in planning and forecasting to maximise profitability and customer satisfaction through driving availability and optimising working capital.

Be a champion of change by embracing new tools, processes and systems.

By leveraging your accountabilities and essential skills, you will lead the Merchandising team, drive category performance, and contribute to the overall success of John Lewis Partnership.

Primary Outcomes & Accountabilities

Strategic Decision-Making:

Primary Outcome: Make informed and data-driven decisions to drive category performance and business growth.

Accountability: Analyse market trends, sales data, and financial

Measures of success

Margin/Controllable Contribution: Deliver margin budgets while effectively managing costs, ensuring that controllable contribution across the category is maximised to drive overall profitability and financial performance.

Sales Revenue Growth: Strategically plan assortments and



metrics to make strategic decisions regarding product assortment, pricing, and promotional activities, maximising profitability and market share.

Strategy:

Primary Outcome: Develop and implement merchandising & category strategies aligned with business objectives, resulting in increased profit, sales revenue and market share.

Accountability: Plan and execute merchandising strategies for assigned categories, ensuring optimal product placement and assortment to meet customer demand and drive commercial outcomes.

Team Leadership and Development:

Primary Outcome: Foster a high-performance culture and enhance team capabilities, leading to improved productivity, succession planning and job satisfaction.

Accountability: Lead and coach the merchandising team, providing guidance and support to optimize processes, capabilities, and performance, resulting in a more efficient and effective team.

Financial Management:

Primary Outcome: Optimise margin performance and cost control measures to drive profitability.

Accountability: Manage budgetary allocations and cost control measures to optimise margin performance.

Cross-Functional Collaboration:

Primary Outcome: Facilitate seamless collaboration between buying and merchandising teams, ensuring alignment of strategies and goals.

Accountability: Collaborate closely with other Heads of Merchandising, Buying, Commercial Planning, Commercial Optimisation, Finance and Supply Chain to provide consolidated views of financials and working capital, fostering alignment and synergy across departments.

Promotional Sales Planning:

Primary Outcome: Drive profitability through effective promotional sales planning and pricing strategies.

Accountability: Develop and implement promotional sales plans to maximise revenue and profitability, responding to market trends and opportunities to capitalise on trading opportunities.

promotional activities to drive consistent growth in sales revenue, leveraging market insights and customer preferences to maximise sales opportunities within the category.

Cost of Goods Sold (COGs) Management: Rigorously analyse and manage COGs to strike the balance between competitive pricing and product quality, implementing cost-saving initiatives and efficient procurement practices to enhance profitability without compromising on standards.

Stockloss Reduction: Implement proactive measures to minimise product stockloss and optimise inventory management practices, maintaining optimal stock levels while reducing excess inventory and minimising write-offs.

Partner Net Promoter Score (NPS): Continuously monitor partner satisfaction levels with product assortments and buying decisions, actively addressing feedback and concerns to enhance overall partner satisfaction and loyalty.

Cash Flow Management: Implement robust cash flow management strategies, including efficient purchasing and inventory replenishment practices, to ensure adequate liquidity and financial stability for the category.

Market Share Growth: Develop and execute strategic initiatives to capture additional market share within the category, leveraging competitive insights and market trends to strengthen the category's position and increase its share of the market.

Team Development: Invest in the continuous development of the merchandising team's capabilities through training, mentorship, and coaching initiatives, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and high performance to drive sustainable business growth and success.



Inventory Management:

Primary Outcome: Optimise inventory levels and minimise stockloss, resulting in improved cash flow and profitability.

Accountability: Manage inventory levels and stock allocations, ensuring availability of products while minimizing excess inventory and stockloss, contributing to improved cash flow and profitability.

Supplier Relationship Management:

Primary Outcome: Cultivate and maintain strong relationships with suppliers, ensuring timely delivery and quality of products as well as maximising commercial outcomes through monetising available tools.

Accountability: Manage supplier relationships, negotiating terms and agreements to optimize product availability, quality, and cost, contributing to improved customer satisfaction and commercial outcomes.

Operational Excellence:

Primary Outcome: Drive operational excellence and efficiency within the merchandising function, resulting in streamlined processes and cost savings. Work closely with the Commercial Optimisation team to ensure standardisation.

Accountability: Identify opportunities for process improvement and efficiency gains, within the merchandising function, implementing initiatives to streamline workflows, reduce costs, and enhance operational effectiveness.

Skills

Strategy Development: Proficient in planning and executing merchandising & category strategies tailored to meet business objectives and market demands.

Inventory Management: Expertise in inventory control techniques, including forecasting, allocation, and replenishment, to optimize stock levels and minimize stockloss.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: Advanced analytical skills to interpret sales data, market trends, and customer insights, enabling informed decision-making and strategic planning.

Supplier Relationship Management: Strong negotiation and communication skills to build and maintain productive relationships with suppliers, ensuring best COGS & commercial agreements, timely delivery and quality of products.

Pricing and Promotion: Knowledge of pricing strategies and promotional tactics to drive sales and profitability, balancing competitive positioning with margin objectives.

Team Leadership and Development: Proven leadership abilities to inspire and motivate teams, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Cross-Functional Collaboration: Ability to collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams, including buying, customer, finance and operations, to align strategies with overall business objectives.

Retail Industry Knowledge: Deep understanding of retail industry dynamics, market trends, and competitive landscape, enabling proactive adaptation to market changes and emerging opportunities.

Financial Acumen: Sound understanding of financial metrics and profitability drivers, including margin analysis, cost management, and budgeting, to drive sustainable business growth.

Technological Proficiency: Familiarity with inventory management systems, and analytical tools to streamline processes and enhance decision-making capabilities in a digital retail environment.

Adaptability and Resilience: Ability to thrive in a dynamic and fast-paced environment, demonstrating flexibility, adaptability, and resilience to navigate changes, uncertainties, and market disruptions effectively.

Qualifications & Experience (where applicable)

Essential

Minimum of 5 years of experience in merchandising or retail management: Proven track record of success in roles involving merchandising strategy development, inventory management, and supplier relationship management within the retail industry.

Experience in a leadership role: Demonstrated experience in leading and developing teams, with a track record of driving performance, fostering collaboration, and achieving business objectives.

Strong analytical skills: Proficiency in data analysis and interpretation, with the ability to derive actionable insights from sales data, market trends, and customer behaviour to inform merchandising strategies.

Excellent communication and negotiation skills: Effective communication skills, both verbal and written, coupled with strong negotiation abilities to build and maintain relationships with suppliers and cross-functional teams.

Financial acumen: Sound understanding of financial metrics and profitability drivers, with experience in margin analysis, cost management, and budgeting to drive sustainable business growth.

Retail industry knowledge: In-depth understanding of retail industry dynamics, market trends, and competitive landscape, enabling proactive adaptation to market changes and identification of emerging opportunities.

Proficiency in merchandising software and analytical tools: Familiarity with merchandising software, inventory management systems, and analytical tools to streamline processes and enhance decision-making capabilities in a digital retail environment.

Proven experience in strategic stock planning: Track record of success in strategic stock planning within a large retail environment, including forecasting demand, optimising inventory levels, and minimizing wastage while ensuring product availability and cost control.



Experience in pricing strategy and promotional activity: Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing pricing strategies and promotional activities to drive sales and profitability in a retail setting, including an understanding of competitive pricing dynamics and margin optimisation.

Desirable

Postgraduate qualification in Retail Management or Business Administration: Further education or professional certification demonstrating advanced knowledge and expertise in retail management principles and practices.

Experience in international retail or global supply chain management: Exposure to international retail markets or supply chains, including sourcing and procurement from global suppliers, can be advantageous in a competitive retail landscape.

Experience in omni-channel retailing: Understanding of omni-channel retail strategies and experience in implementing integrated merchandising approaches across multiple sales channels, including online, brick-and-mortar stores, and mobile platforms.

Experience in category-specific merchandising: Specialised experience in merchandising within specific product categories, such as fashion, electronics, or home goods, providing insight and expertise in category-specific merchandising strategies.

Certification in merchandising or retail management: Professional certification from recognised industry bodies or associations, such as the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) or the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), demonstrating commitment to continuous professional development and expertise in retail merchandising practices

Version	Created/updated by	Date
v1	J.Williams/Lorna Davidson	17/06